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THE CINCINNATI ART CLUB



COVER DESIGN IN COLOR
DESIGNED BY JOHN D. WAREHAM
AND W. P. McDONALD

The spring exhibition of the Cincinnati Art Club, in its handsome gallery, No. 126 East Fourth Street, was by far the best and most interesting one ever held by the club.

Before making any criticism of the pictures, it may not be amiss to give a brief résumé of the doings of the club since its organization in 1890, at which time it was known as the Cincinnati Sketch Club, the name of the Cincinnati Art Club being adopted about one year later.

During the life of the Sketch Club it was truly bohemian in having no fixed abode, meetings being held at the studios and homes of the different artist members, where the host became the owner of all sketches made. But this plan was

found undesirable for many reasons, so a regular constitution and by-laws were adopted, embodying a more definite and fixed aim—namely, “To advance the knowledge and love of art through exhibitions of works of art, lectures on subjects pertaining to art, and to promote social intercourse among its members.” The associate membership feature was next adopted, and was found to work well. An associate member is one who is not a professional artist, but has a love for art and things artistic, and who pays the same dues as an artist member. These associates are not eligible to office, and have no active part in the management of the club. It is their privilege to be entertained in various ways, and the duty of the artist members to see that this privilege is accorded to them.

As the promotion of good-fellowship among members is one of its objects, the entertainment of associate members is a special feature. Artistic dinners in the costumes and according to the customs of historic periods have been given at Thanksgiving and Christmas times. Here the humble artist sits “cheek by jowl” with his fellow associate millionaire member, discoursing on art and the good things set before them, and a spirit of bohemian camaraderie prevails.

During the Christmas holidays of 1897 the club gave a notable function, embodying the customs, costumes, and doings of the people of New Amsterdam and environment in 1646. Here Peter Stuyvesant, clad in black velvet, long cloak, and chimney-pot hat, stumped along with his wooden leg; there were well-fed burghers, while the night-watch, with his steel cuirass and morion, lanthorn, and pike, sought to preserve peace in the town, while keeping a sharp lookout



OCTOBER, BY E. S. BUTLER, JR.

on a dozen Indians, clad only in breech-clout, war-paint, tomahawk, and feathers, whose blood-curdling yells and characteristic war dances (Farny and "Indian Joe" trained these fellows) made the cold chills run down one's back. This occasion was pronounced the equal of anything of the kind ever given in the bohemia of Munich or Paris.

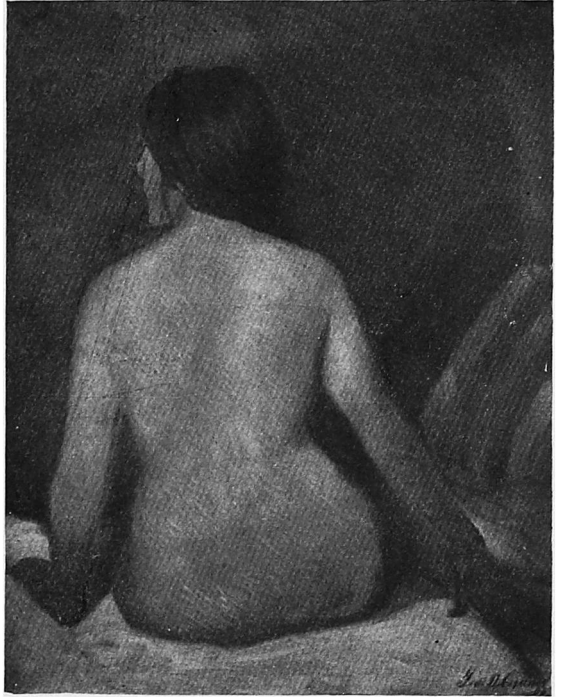
Next in succession and notable in importance came the Old English Yuletide Dinner of Christmas, 1899, embodying the costumes and customs prevailing in England at the time of Richard Coeur de Leon, and so well described in Scott's "Ivanhoe." But as a description of this dinner would take too much space, we may say that it was a complete success, and one of the most notable and artistic events in the annals of our city.

Another event of interest was the Tombola, or raffle. This scheme was gotten up to raise money to fit up the rooms and gallery,

and was a novel one in certain features. There were no blanks in the wheel; every ticket-holder was entitled to a prize of some kind, and as a consequence the tickets sold with surprising rapidity. The artist members furnished oil and water-color paintings and monotypes to the number of about two hundred, and the remainder of the twelve hundred prizes were made up of etchings from a dozen or more first-class plates and auto-lithographs, made by six or eight of our strong men, and printed from the different stones at the club-rooms on the evening of the drawing of prizes. The success of the Tom-bola was beyond expectations, and netted the club a sum of money sufficient to fit up the spacious and well-lighted gallery in which the recent exhibition was held.

Now, gentle reader, come with me, and we will review the pictures and other works of art; but a word with you before beginning this pleasant task. Be it known that no jury of selection has, with

tomahawk and scalping-knife, "killed" any of the artists' works or put them in "the morgue"; each artist member is entitled in the present instance to have at least one or more works of art on exhibition, whether good, bad, or indifferent, and it is a very pleasing fact to note that, notwithstanding this "open-door policy," there is very little poor work on exhibition; the good being largely in evidence. As we pick up the catalogue, we are struck by an unusual design, in color, on its cover, the work of Wareham and McDonald, of the Rookwood Pottery. The original design, which hangs on the walls, being a poster modeled in bas-relief and treated with dry colors, producing a brilliancy of shading and iridescence of effect obtainable only in this way. Another poster by the same artists, "Home from the Holy



DANÆ, BY GEO. DEBEREINER

Wars," is done in the same fashion. The beauty of both these posters in design and color is of such a subtle and abstract nature that the only word that will describe them is the word "stunning," with all the implied meaning as used by artists.

The picture of George Debereiner, called "Danae," is a nude, showing the back view of a woman in a sitting posture, and painted under the influence of a mellow artificial light. It shows evidence of truthful study and much thought, and is broadly and cleverly treated. Next on the walls comes Farny's large water-color, "The Old Buffalo Trail." Indians! did you say? To be sure; but it is one



"THE LONG DAY'S TASK IS DONE."—*Shakespeare*
BY H. F. FARNY

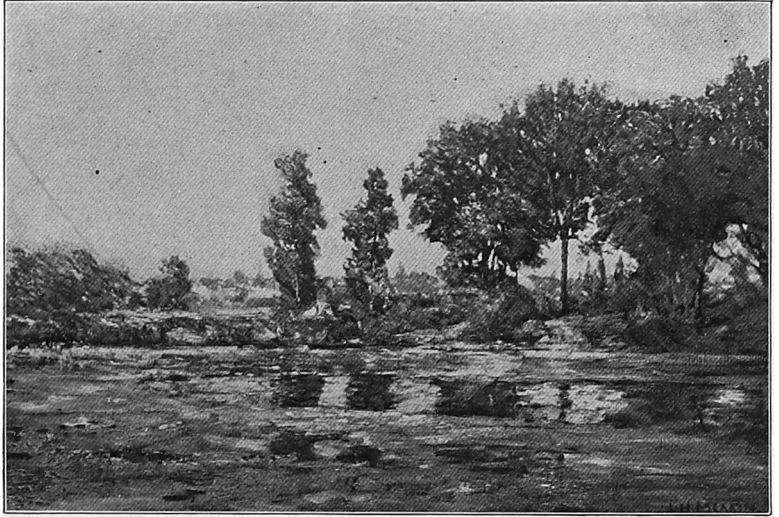
of Farny's characteristic Indian compositions, and one of his latest and best. Mr. Farny is a strong man in composition. In "The Long Day's Task Is Done" Mr. Farny has truthfully portrayed a kind of sentiment which he only occasionally gives expression to, and for this reason his picture is greatly admired by the public.

J. W. Dunsmore is best represented by his portrait work, three examples of which are on the walls. He is a clever draughtsman and realistic in his effects. His use of color with good effect is seen in his charming little picture, "A Lady of Quality." (See page 67.)

W. A. McCord's "The Close of Day" is a peaceful and harmonious expression of the subject.

There are two portraits by Mr. Nowotny, which are cleverly painted. "October in the Mackatewah," by E. S. Butler, Jr., is accounted his best work. It is "a truthful bit of color, quiet and restful." Mr. L. H. Meakin is best represented in "A Summer After-

noon," luminous in color and broadly and suggestively painted. Mr. J. H. Sharp has a number of Indian heads done in his usual clever manner, but his picture called "The Great Sleep" represents him best. It is a picture of a "good Indian," and represents a grave in the Far West; a rude platform resting on four uprights, on which lies the chief, wrapped in his tepee, with his weapons of war and the chase hanging near. Mr. Sharp has expressed in low-toned grays and browns the utter loneliness of the scene.



SUMMER AFTERNOON, BY L. H. MEAKIN

Frank Duveneck is represented in this exhibition by two works, his portrait of J. Rettig being the more representative.

Mr. F. Edwin Elwell, of New York, is an honorary member of the club, and exhibits his bronze statue, "The Orchid." A beautiful young woman, in a dancing attitude, is gracefully poised on one foot, which hardly seems to touch the earth. The upward action of the arms, the spring of the foot, and the suggestive airiness of the drapery, all tend to convey the idea that she is of the air, as is the orchid.

"The Panther," by Enno Meyer, is a truthful piece of modeling, broad and simple in treatment, and full of character.

Leo Mielziner's bronze bust of Zangwill is a capital portrait. John G. Reilley shows a number of exceedingly clever water-color sketches, of which "At the Public Landing" is probably the most interesting. Reilley is one of those clever beings who, with a dash of color and a few lines, gets his effects without apparent effort.

The pastels of Mr. C. S. Kaelin are done in a manner peculiarly

his own. Kaelin uses a dark gray, rough wrapping-paper, the tone of which, uncovered or with a few suggestive lines, he uses largely for shadows. His color is strong but suggestive, his drawing firm and intelligent, but loosely put together, and with this simple method he produces an atmosphere and effect that is highly artistic.

John Rettig's "On the Veranda" is a careful study of values and contrasts of direct sunlight and reflected light. It is an interesting solution of an artist's problem. F. Hopkinson Smith, of New York, is also an honorary member of the club, and has loaned two of his best water-colors for the present exhibition.

A modest but odd-looking little vase, of a greenish gray color, in the Rookwood case of pottery, is by A. Van Briggie. A study of it reveals many beautiful points of artistic interest. The upper part of the vase shows the head and shoulders of a nude woman, with hair falling down her back. The head rests on one arm, while the



BRONZE STATUE, THE ORCHID
BY FRANK EDWIN ELWELL

other arm, thrown carelessly forward, forms the mouth of the vase, the rest of the figure appearing here and there, now seen, now only felt beneath the surface modeling. The idea of the nude is further carried out by the texture of the vase itself, which has the soft, velvety suggestion of the human skin. There is no polished glaze to destroy with its inevitable and garish high light the harmony of either form or color. It is one of the most artistic things in the exhibition. In other Rookwood vases, by Daly, Wareham, Laurence, Valentin,



CLOSE OF DAY, BY WM. McCORD



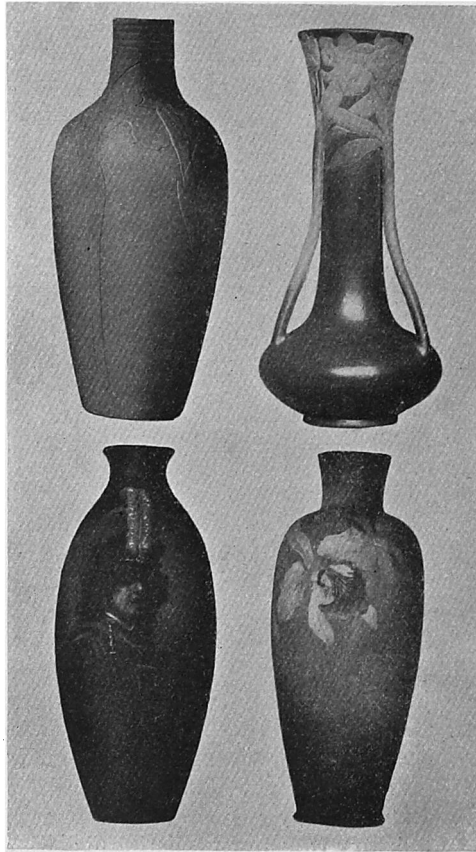
A VENETIAN DAY, BY F. HOPKINSON SMITH

and McDonald, the decoration has been treated with the same intention Puvis De Chavannes applied to his mural decoration, to make the design practically become part of the surface decorated rather than a design separated from the surface by realistic painting or modeling. This is accomplished in the pottery by avoiding sharp contrasts of color or line, by especially fitting the design to the shape of the vase, and conventionalizing as much as possible the design itself, and keeping it subservient to the general effect, so that it is felt rather than actually seen.

It is to be regretted that the highly polished glaze which is put on the Rookwood ware cannot be done away with; but they say this is not possible, as the glaze is necessary to protect the ware and produce that depth of color so characteristic of and highly prized in this especial pottery. The glaze produces a mirror or a reflected highlight on every piece of glazed ware, which by its brilliancy is sadly out of key with the general color of the vase, destroying all harmony of color and often obliterating temporarily both the local color and design itself to such an extent that the beauty of both are lost.

Taking the exhibition as a whole, it is one of which the club may well be proud. It has aroused among its members, young and old, artist and associate, an enthusiasm that is sure to push the club into the foremost ranks of organizations of its kind.

E. S. BUTLER, JR.



ROOKWOOD VASES, BY MATT DALV, J. DEE WAREHAM, STURGIS LAURENCE, A. R. VALENTIEN